



Proper Staffing for Special Education

November 11, 2013
OSBA Capital Conference

Steve Milano, Superintendent, LCSD
Micki Egli, Dir of Special Programs, LCSD
Jerry Brodsky, Chief Executive Manager, AEC
Carol Denzinger, SPED Consultant, AEC

Goal for the Day:

- Answer your questions:
 - Why is it so difficult to identify proper staffing levels for special education?
 - How does improper staffing affect both costs and student achievement?
 - How did Louisville CSD and American Educational Consultants go about gathering the information to identify if Louisville was below, at, or above proper staffing levels?
 - How does a consultant group help do this and why might you want to use them for this purpose?

Introductions

- Steve Milano, Superintendent, Louisville CSD
- Micki Egli, Director of Special Programs, Louisville CSD
- Jerry Brodsky, Chief Executive Manager, American Educational Consultants
- Carol Denzinger, Special Education Program/Data Specialist, American Educational Consultants

What is “Average” Cost for Special Education?

- SEEP report “What are we spending on Special Education in the United States?” June 2004
 - Total expenditures for students with disabilities including BOTH special education and general education expenditures represents an average of 21% of district costs
 - Special education spending averaged 14-15% of education budget
 - Between 1968-2000 the average spending per special education student remained between 1.9 – 2.28 times the cost to educate a general education student
 - Special education transportation costs average approximately 7% of the special education budget

What is “Average” cost for Special Education?

- SEEP (Special Education Expenditure Project) June 2003 Report
 - Expenditures for students with learning disabilities are 1.6 times higher than for general education students
 - Expenditures for students with multiple disabilities are 3.1 times higher than for general education students
 - On average, for the 1999-2000 school year, cost to educate a student with disabilities was 91% higher than a general education student
 - During that same year, costs to educate students with disabilities in private placements were an 3.9 times higher than general education students

Why is it so difficult to identify proper staffing levels for students with disabilities?

- Ohio Revised Code workload/caseload considerations
- IEP-driven instructional services
- IEP-driven support services
- Service needs influenced by service providers
- Comparables more difficult to match up

Proposed ORC wording

Proposed 3301-51-09(I)(1)

- (1) Service provider ~~ratios~~ workload determination for delivery of services
- (i) The school district, county board of developmental disabilities (~~county board of developmental disabilities~~), and other educational agencies shall determine ~~ratios~~ workload for an individual service provider by following a workload process to include: ~~considering scheduling and time demands of preschool or school-age service providers, including but not limited to the following:~~
 - (a) All areas of service provided to children with and without disabilities, including, but not limited to: school duties, staff meetings, professional development, supervisions, travel/transitions, screening, assessment, evaluation, progress documentation and reporting, secondary transition service planning, conference/consultation pertaining to individual students, documentation for individual students, and third party billing requirements

Proposed changes in ORC

Proposed 3301-51-09(I)(1)(b)

- (b) The severity of each eligible child's need, and the level and frequency of services necessary to provide a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) ~~for children to attain IEP goals and objectives.~~

ORC 3301-51-09(I)(2) (Continued)

(2) School-age service providers will provide specially designed instruction in accordance with a workload process with respect to any requirements limiting the number of students per licensed professional, as set forth below. ~~direct services in accordance with the following ratios~~

- 24:1 Cognitive Disabilities, Specific Learning Disabled and Cross-Categorical (High School)
- 16:1 Cognitive Disabilities, Specific Learning Disabled and Cross-Categorical (Elementary and Middle School)
- 12:1 Emotional Disturbances
- 10:1 Hearing Impaired, Vision Impaired, Other Health Impairment
- 8:1 Multiple Disabilities
- 6:1 Autism, Deaf-Blindness, Traumatic Brain Injury

ORC 3301-51-09(I)(3)

(Proposed Change as of 9/3/13)

(3) Related service providers for preschool and school-age children with disabilities shall provide ~~direct services~~ specially designed instruction in accordance with a workload process with respect to any requirements limiting the number of students per licensed professional as set forth below.

- 50:1 Occupational Therapist (School Age)
- 40:1 Occupational Therapist (Preschool)
- 50:1 Physical Therapist (School Age)
- 40:1 Physical Therapist (Preschool)
- 80:1 Speech/Language Pathologist (School age)
- 50:1 Speech/Language Pathologist (Multiple Disabilities, Hearing Impairments, Orthopedic/Other Health Impairments; or Preschool age children)

Workload considerations

- 37.5 hrs Length of work week
- 2.5 hrs Lunch and breaks
- 2.5 hrs Required Professional Time
 - School Duties and Clerical Duties
 - Intervention Duties
 - Required meetings (general, IEP, ETR)
 - Travel between buildings
 - Intensity of child need

* 25.0 hrs Time that students are available for therapy

Ohio Funding Formula

Category	2014 Funding Level	Students Covered
1	\$1,503	Speech Delayed
2	\$3,813	Developmentally Handicapped, Other Health Impaired (minor) & Learning Disabled
3	\$9,160	Emotionally Disturbed & Hearing Impaired
4	\$12,225	Orthopedically Impaired, OHI (Major), Vision Impaired
5	\$16,557	Multi-Handicapped, Orthopedically Handicapped
6	\$24,407	Deaf/Blind, Autistic, Traumatic Brain Injury

Staffing Issues

- **Interventionists** – the *natural consequences* of pullout as opposed to students being in inclusive settings
- **Related services staff** – the *natural consequences* of staff involved in the development of the IEP and service plan in position to recommend their own services; monitor service delivery times for students to ensure equity between therapists; Ohio's ratios for related service staff are some of the highest in the country – difficult to provide quality speech services with a caseload of 80 when students have significant needs
- **Paraprofessionals** – *natural tendency to over-staff and over-use* support help; data to support their need vs. parent/school perceived needs; clearly defining roles and responsibilities that provide guidance as to how much support is the right amount to allow each child to develop a proper level of independent knowledge, skills and life attitudes; "instruction" often provided by the untrained/uncertified assistant rather than a teacher. Schedule aides on a per building basis rather than a per child basis?
- **Natural tendency to maintain status quo instead of needs-based staffing**

How we began in Louisville

- **Consultants identified:**
 - Data needs
 - The proper team
 - Scope of work
 - Costs
- **School district:**
 - Prepared administrative and teaching staff
 - Approved scope of work and costs
 - Provided local data and scheduled building site visits

What are we thinking?

- **Louisville CSD**
 - Our responsibilities to students with disabilities and to our taxpayers mandates a closer look at how we provide proper services to students at the lowest costs.
- **American Educational Consultants**
 - We can provide school districts expertise and the time needed to help them identify if their staffing for students with disabilities is too tight, wasteful, or just right.

The work

- **AEC:**
 - Introductory meeting
 - Data analysis
 - Site visits (SpEd + GenEd Teachers, Paras, Parents)
 - Report compilation
 - Executive Summary
 - Commendations/Recommendations
 - Narrative, charts, appendices
 - Feasibility analysis conducted
 - Report presented to Admin and/or Board

The work

- **Louisville CSD:**
 - Prepared administrators and staff for the project
 - Gathered necessary data
 - Scheduled site visits and local meetings
 - Received report presented to Admin (and/or Board)
 - Communicated commendations and recommendations to staff
 - Worked with AEC to develop strategic implementation plan
 - Implemented recommendations, as desired

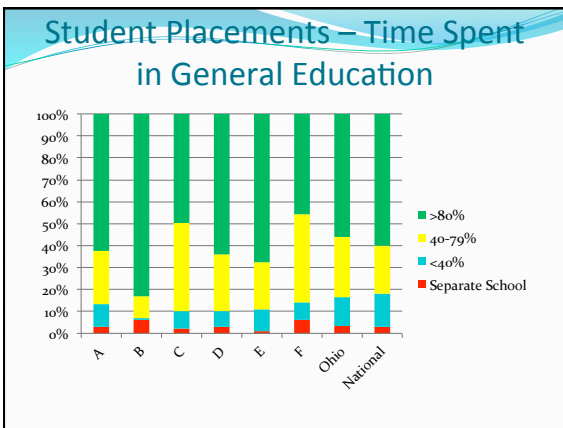
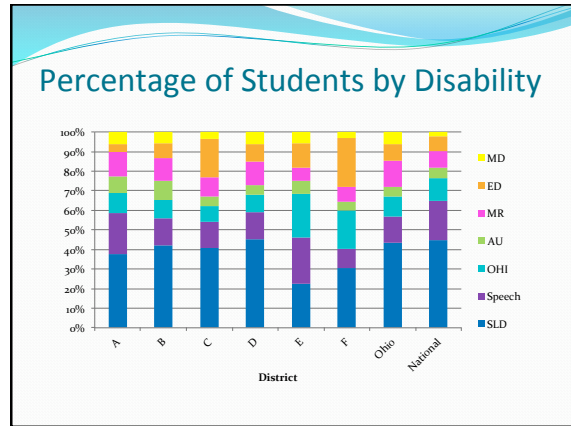
Charting important indicators

- Identification Rates and comparison to similar districts
- Student Outcomes
- Time in regular education classes and why that's important
- Legal challenge costs reduction
- Revenue maximization

Overall Percentage of SWD

District	# of Preschool Students with Disabilities	# of School Age Students with Disabilities	% of Preschool Students with Disabilities	% of School Age Students with Disabilities
A	164	768	3.35%	10.67%
B	86	665	2.40%	18.52%
C	115	389	5.07%	13.14%
D	63	555	1.63%	8.38%
E	59	431	1.89%	9.84%
F	167	1121	2.39%	12.02%
Ohio Average*	NA	NA	5.09%	9.40%
Nat'l Average*	NA	NA	5.94%	8.46%

*National Data Accountability Center, 2010 data



Example Time Analysis

	# Students	Average Minutes per pupil	Hours Required*	Speech FTE required
Preschool	37	110	22	.6
Elementary	99	54	44.5	2.0
Middle	24	26.5	9.25	.35
High School	5	32.5	2.1	<.1
Total Speech Therapists required				3 FTE

- ### Know your costs & revenues
- Know your costs
 - Identify cost centers to monitor
 - Insure staff, programming and other costs are properly coded within your USAS reports
 - Compare those cost centers to local/state/national expectations, noting building-to-building differences and varied student service trends
 - Know your revenue streams
 - Know your revenues and ensure you are maximizing reimbursements

- ### Financial Data
- Available on ODE website:
 - 2012 District Profile Report (CUPP Report)
 - 2009 Fiscal Accountability Report
 - District Annual Financial Reports
 - Expenditure per Pupil by Category Report (2012)
 - State and National Statistics
 - IDEA Data Accountability Center (www.ideadata.org)

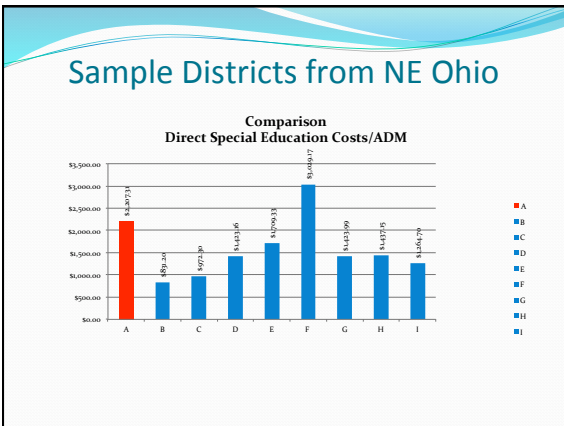
2012 District Profile Report (Cupp Report)

- Demographic data on percentage of students with disabilities, poverty, etc.
- Total expenditures per pupil
- Pupil support expenditures per pupil
 - Special education costs for related services are captured here
- Staff support expenditures per pupil

Special Education Weighted Funds Fiscal Accountability Report*

- Special Education Transportation
- Catastrophic Aid Reimbursement
- Special Education Instruction
- Special Education portion of Support Services

* Last report available was from 2009

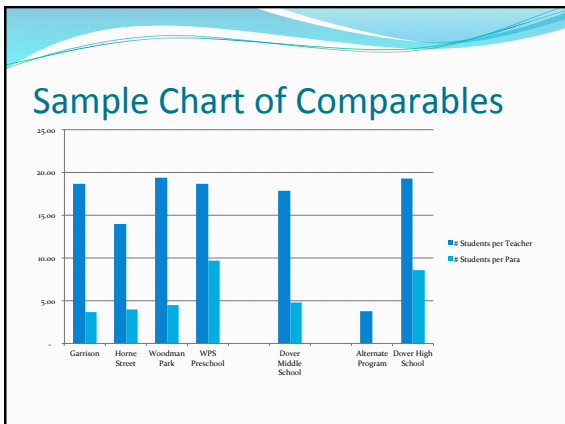


Cost Recommendations

- Ensure account codes accurately track special education costs
- Monitor % of district budget spent on special education (including special education instruction, related services and special education transportation) – attempt to maintain between 15-18% of total budget
- Monitor cost per special education student which averages approximately twice the cost of general education student
- Monitor staffing including aides and related service personnel
- Monitor private placements to reduce costs
- Monitor transportation costs

Reimbursement Recommendations

- Ensure system maximizes reimbursement for all students through accurate and complete EMIS data
- Ensure system maximizes catastrophic reimbursement; track data throughout the year for easier and more accurate accounting
- Evaluate implementation and reimbursement costs for Medicaid and take advantage as appropriate
- Ensure system collects tuition from ALL out-of-district students served by the district (through SF-6 & SF-14H)



Staffing issues - recommendations

- Understand and be sensitive to both sides
- Recognize parent issues and their concerns
- Validate parent feelings & acknowledge parent
- Remind all staff members to focus on the child and the child's needs
- Provide strong, solid programs and interventions within the general education environment to ensure that student needs can be appropriately met
- Ensure that the district has staff available to discuss ALL major disabilities and researched based interventions as needed - identify staff expertise and use it effectively to help address student needs

Forming a Strategic Plan for Improvement

- Setting priorities
 - Process & results
 - Who will be allowed to provide input?
 - Who will collate the input into draft priorities?
 - What form will the results be put in for who's approval?
- Setting realistic timelines
 - Process & results
 - What demonstrates you are serious about improvement?
 - What gets the culture moving in the right direction?
 - What is realistic for improvement to occur successfully?
 - How/when will progress/success be reported and to whom?

Sample Strategic Plan

Task	Start Day	End Day
Identify special ed staff to be trained in behavior interventions to meet	0	5
require data on current goals/objectives as part of all new IEPs	0	45
start discussion to move all students from current ED program back to	0	10
continue efforts to push forward PBIS; develop menu of tier 2 and 3	0	15
ED eligibility committee meets to review eligibility concerns, complete	0	10
develop guidelines for decision making regarding placement in self-	0	10
district leadership meet with leadership from birth to 3 system vendors to	0	10
district leadership meet with child development leadership to discuss and	0	10
buildings review special education recommendations and identify their own	0	10
initiate committee to review ED eligibility vs. conduct disorder and make	0	10
coordinators meet with ed techs to review job responsibilities and discuss	0	10
notify staff of new requirement that they prepare & provide parents with a	0	15
continue plans to train one additional teacher in autism programming this	0	15
notify staff that as of 1/1/2012 data from past IEPs will be required as part	0	10
decide whether to fill the role of clinical coordinator with one current	0	10
put together special education management team to continue plan	0	10

Forming a Strategic Plan for Improvement

- Changing district culture
 - Who will be the change agents and how will they go about making improvements?
 - How will you measure change?
 - What level of change will be deemed successful?
- Collaborating with parents
 - Who will be the change agents and how will they go about making improvements?
 - How will you measure change?
 - What level of change will be deemed successful?
- Focusing on district-wide and individual student needs
 - What are our goals and how will we measure success?

Impact on Louisville Schools

- Continuous monitoring of special education staff
- Curriculum department joined the RTI movement & helped establish further needed parameters
- District-wide implementation of RTI Initiative
- Creation of Middle and High School RTI teams
- PBIS - while the elementaries and middle school had successful PBIS plans in place, there wasn't a strong RTI process in place for behavior concerns.
- Mediation sessions with court appointed mediator for significant attendance & behavior issues

How AEC can help you:

- to do what you don't have time to do
- to do what you don't have the experience or in-district skills to do
- to do what you want an outside, independent educational person/group to analyze
- to analyze, in an apolitical way, something that is sensitive in your school/community
- to train your people to be able to do analysis in the future that they cannot do today